



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 154

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JUNE 10, 2008

No. 95

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JON TESTER, a Senator from the State of Montana.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

"God of our fathers, whose almighty hand leads forth in beauty, all the starry band of shining worlds and splendor through the skies, our grateful songs before Your throne arise."

Lord, give the Members of this body Your special grace. The responsibility they face is difficult and daunting. Let Your light and truth infuse this place today, and may our lawmakers depend completely upon Your transcendent wisdom. Use them as children of light and heirs of Your everlasting inheritance. May their lives ever praise Your wonderful and Holy Name. In the Name of Him who is perfect justice and unlimited compassion. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JON TESTER led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 10, 2008.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JON TESTER, a Sen-

ator from the State of Montana, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. TESTER thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of Senator MCCONNELL, if he chooses to make some, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 3044, the Consumer-First Energy Act. There will then be 1 hour for debate prior to a series of 5 rollcall votes. The first vote in the series will be a cloture vote on the motion to proceed to the Consumer-First Energy Act. If cloture is not invoked on the motion to proceed, the Senate will proceed to a cloture vote on the motion to proceed to H.R. 6049, the Renewable Energy and Job Creation Act. Following that vote, or votes, there will be up to 10 minutes for debate under the control of Senators LEAHY and SPECTER prior to a series of up to three rollcall votes on the confirmation of three district court judges.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time Senator MCCONNELL and I use not be charged against the 1 hour precloture time so that there will be a full hour of debate on the issue relating to gas prices.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONSUMER-FIRST ENERGY ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, last Friday, I spoke of the high energy prices—I

have done that on a number of occasions recently—and the need for the Senate to pass the Consumer-First Energy Act. That will be the first vote we will have.

When I came to the Senate floor Friday, we had already had a very difficult day. We got up and saw in the newspaper that day that the market had crashed and gas prices were spiraling up to \$132 a barrel. There were other things that were not good from an economic perspective. I did not have any idea that the price of oil would go up to almost \$140 a barrel. Actually, it did that during the remarks I was making.

The massive spike in oil prices we saw on Friday and the corresponding 400-point drop in the Dow only compounded the crisis that has been growing for months and even years. When President Bush took office, a barrel of oil cost \$32 and a gallon of gasoline cost less than \$1.50. Of course, now, the average price in our country is more than \$4 a gallon, for the first time in the history of our country.

The President took us to war—a war of choice—and Vice President CHENEY invited oil executives to the White House to secretly write our national energy legislation. It was secret, so people went to court—it went all the way to the Supreme Court—to try to find out whom he met with, what he talked about, and what arrangements he made with the big oil companies. He was able to keep it secret. It is still secret. All we know is that the oil companies made \$250 billion in net profit last year. So we have a pretty good idea what went on in the White House. They never asked the oil executives, obviously, to build new refineries or to invest in clean, renewable alternative fuels. They apparently failed to consider the national security implications of our addiction to oil and never

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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